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upon a text of the runic inscriptions on the Crosses one must render a Scotch verdict upon any philological argument as to their date.<sup>2</sup>

W. P. REEVES.

Gambier, O.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### WORDSWORTH'S KNOWLEDGE OF PLATO

The "skeptic" whom Jeffrey represents in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1829) as hazarding the opinion that Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* is no more than a late expression of Plato's doctrine of metempsychosis (an allegation which Wordsworth denied), is not the only one to have seen a similarity between Wordsworth and Plato. "The Platonic poet *par excellence*," Mr. J. A. Stewart calls Wordsworth,<sup>1</sup> adding the remark that not only is the *Prelude* the classic authority on Platonism in poetry, but it is so important in this respect that he advises the study of it as a preparation for the study of Platonism in all other English poetry. Mr. J. H. Shorthouse, in an article on "Platonism in Wordsworth"<sup>2</sup> also notes a general similarity between Wordsworth and Plato, but thinks the connection stops there. Much Platonism has been found in Wordsworth's poetry,<sup>3</sup> yet little has been said of how much about Plato Wordsworth really knew.

Wordsworth's first opportunity to become acquainted with Plato was in college, but how much of Plato he may have read there is a matter of conjecture. Although, as Christopher Wordsworth notes,<sup>4</sup> Gray had complained in 1754 that Plato was then little known at Cambridge, the *Laws* was among the college text-books in the first half of the eighteenth century, and may still have been used in Wordsworth's student-days. Moreover, as a student he lived in a

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Cook, *The Date of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses*, Yale University Press, 1912. *Some Accounts of the Bewcastle Cross*, Yale Studies in English, I, 1914. G. F. Browne, *The Ancient Cross Shafts at Bewcastle and Ruthwell*, Cambridge University Press, 1916; reviewed by Professor Cook in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, June, 1917.

<sup>1</sup> *English Literature and the Classics*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, vi, 117-131.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e. g., J. A. Stewart, *op. cit.*; J. H. Shorthouse, *op. cit.*; A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on English Poetry*, pp. 99-150; Walter Raleigh, *Wordsworth*, p. 165; John Veitch, in *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, viii, 24-51.

<sup>4</sup> *Scholiae Academicæ*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 115.

community of young bloods who felt a restlessness which ripened later into the project of the "Pantisocracy," in which Coleridge (also of Cambridge) and Southey were involved; and this scheme, if we had more information about it than the meagre account, the most detailed we have, in Thomas Poole's letter in Mrs. Sanford's *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, we might trace back to Plato's *Republic*. At any rate, even though Wordsworth may not have had his introduction to Plato in college, he had a second opportunity for it through his intimacy with Coleridge.

Mr. Shorthouse thinks it "not impossible" that Coleridge talked to Wordsworth about Plato, and cites Mr. Frederick Pollock as finding some traces of the conversations. It is certain that Coleridge, in his confused and obscure way, was an ardent Platonist,—or rather neo-Platonist. In *Anima Poetae* <sup>5</sup> he says he has Plato in his library and wants Aristotle to go with it; he recommends the works of Plato as food for the journey along the royal road to knowledge; he mentions "the sunny mist, the luminous gloom of Plato"; and in still another place he writes a paragraph in true neo-Platonic style on Platonic love as the divine essence. In a letter of 1796 he tells John Thelwall that he "loves Plato, his dear, gorgeous [sic] nonsense"; and in a letter to Southey, September 10, 1802, he says that in the winter of 1801 he had "read the Parmenides and Timaeus with great care." <sup>6</sup> Mr. C. H. Herford states that in college Coleridge had immersed himself in "the divine imaginings of Plotinus." <sup>7</sup> Finally, in a letter to Lady Beaumont, January 21, 1810, Coleridge speaks of himself as having absorbed the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus, and as having made comments on his favorite philosopher, Jacob Boehme, from Proclus, Plato, and Plotinus. <sup>8</sup>

Concerning Wordsworth's direct knowledge of Plato, I find for Mr. Shorthouse's statement <sup>9</sup> that "it is not likely that he [Wordsworth] ever read the *Dialogues*," what seems to be positive refutation—in the same volume of the Transactions—in the fact that, in the catalogue of the Rydal Mount library, <sup>10</sup> there appear not only a Greek lexicon, a Greek grammar, and two works by Jacob Boehme, but, most significant of all, these three octavo volumes: Schleiermacher's *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato*, from the German, by W. Dobson, M. A., Cambridge, 1836; *The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides, and Timaeus of Plato*, from the Greek, by Thomas Tyler, with notes, etc., Oxford 1793; and a new edition of five dialogues of Plato,—*Platonis Dialogi V, ex recens.* Foster, Oxford,

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, pp. 155, 252-3, 25, 112.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, I, 211-12.

<sup>7</sup> *The Age of Wordsworth*, p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> *Memorials of Coleorton*, ed. Wm. Knight, II, 105, 107.

<sup>9</sup> *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, VI, 120.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195-257, *passim*.

1752. The last of these, with the Greek lexicon published in 1688 and the Greek grammar published in 1781, Wordsworth might conceivably have bought while he was at St. John's College (from 1787 to 1791), though of course the first two he could not have acquired till later,—the first not till 1836. Though the presence of these volumes in his library is no sign that he knew their contents, nevertheless it seems not unreasonable to suppose that Wordsworth was more or less intimately acquainted with the actual writings of Plato, at least with the *Dialogues*; and we may grant him a knowledge of the *Republic*, concerning which no specific evidence as yet appears.<sup>11</sup>

Christopher Wordsworth states in the *Memoirs*<sup>12</sup> that Wordsworth pronounced "Plato's records of the last scenes of the career of Socrates" (together with *Othello*, and Isaac Walton's *Life of George Herbert*) to be "the most pathetic of human compositions,"—a statement which certifies to his knowledge of the *Dialogues*, particularly of the *Phaedo*. Yet Wordsworth did not mention Plato in the list of "Greek writers whom he admired," the list being Demosthenes, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Herodotus.<sup>13</sup> The five specific places where Wordsworth mentions Plato in his poetry are: in the *Prelude*, I, 404, and VI, 294; in *Epitaphs Translated from Chiabrera*, IX, 8; in *Dion*, V, 9; and in the Ecclesiastical Sonnet called *Latitudinarianism* (*Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, III, iv, 6). Though these are few in number, he mentions Aristotle only once, as "the Stagyrte," in the third place cited above, and mentions Socrates not at all.

ELLIOTT A. WHITE.

*Northwestern University.*

#### A NOTE ON THE BIOGRAPHY OF MRS. ELIZA HAYWOOD

Biographers of Mrs. Haywood have been unable to find any references to her career between 1711 and 1721. Dr. G. F. Whicher (*Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood*, 1915) notes (p. 2) that, according to the Register of St. Mary Aldermary, a son of Valentine Haywood and his wife Elizabeth, was christened on 3 December, 1711. The next reference cited by him (p. 3) is the following Advertisement contained in the *Post Boy* for 7 January, 1721: "Whereas Elizabeth Haywood, Wife of the Reverend Mr. Valentine Haywood, eloped from him her Husband on Saturday

<sup>11</sup> His remarks on education in the *Excursion*, IX, suggest the discussion of education in the *Republic*; and it is barely possible that the "Republic" mentioned in the *Prelude*, IX, 226, is Plato's, rather than "democracy."

<sup>12</sup> *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, II, 482.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 491.